

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method for providing rebates to automobile owners based on purchases made at participating retailer locations, the method comprising:
providing an automobile to a customer wherein the automobile is sold to the customer;

~~selling an automobile to a customer wherein~~ providing the customer is provided with a customer identification badge containing a plurality of customer information;

~~retrieving electrically receiving~~ the customer information stored within the customer identification badge at a point of sale computer;

electrically transmitting point of sale purchase information and the customer information over a computer network to a computer at a rebate processing center remote from the point of sale computer; and

providing a rebate to the customer wherein the rebate is calculated based on the purchase information, and wherein the customer identification badge expires after a pre-determined time interval if the customer does not verify that he or she continues to possess the automobile.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the customer identification badge is updated to reflect that the customer continues to possess the automobile ~~expires after a predefined time interval.~~

3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the customer identification badge comprises a magnetically encoded wallet card.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the customer identification badge comprises a bar code.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the customer identification badge comprises a persistent memory module having input and output capabilities wherein the module is attached to the automobile.

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the rebate comprises a check mailed to the customer at quarterly annual time intervals.

7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the rebate is electronically deposited into a bank account specified by the customer.

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the purchase information comprises a rebate amount that a participating retailer is willing to pay.

9. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the retailer provides payment to the rebate processing center to pay for the rebate.

10. (original) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising transmitting the customer information from the automobile dealership to the rebate processing center.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the automobile is leased to the customer.

12. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the automobile is rented to the customer.

13. (currently amended) A system for providing rebates to automobile owners based on purchases made at participating retailer locations, the system comprising:
a first computer configured to encode a customer identification badge with customer information pertaining to a customer who has ~~purchased~~ acquired an automobile;

a second computer at a participating retailer location, the second computer configured to:

(i) retrieve the customer information from the customer identification badge at a point of sale; and

(ii) transmit the customer information and point of sale purchase information to a third computer at a rebate processing center; and

a third computer at a rebate processing center, the third computer configured to:

(i) receive the point of sale purchase information and the customer information from the second computer; and

(ii) generate a rebate for the customer ~~wherein the rebate is based on the purchase information, wherein the customer identification badge expires after a pre-determined time interval if the customer does not verify that he or she continues to possess the automobile.~~

14. (currently amended) The system of claim 13 wherein the customer identification badge is updated to reflect that the customer continues to possess the automobile ~~configured to expire at a predefined time period after it is encoded.~~

15. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the customer identification badge comprises a magnetically encoded wallet card.

16. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the customer identification badge comprises a bar code.

17. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the customer identification badge comprises a persistent memory module having input and output capabilities wherein the module is attached to the automobile.

18. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the third computer is additionally configured to facilitate electronic direct deposit of the rebate into a bank account specified by the customer.

19. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the purchase information comprises a rebate amount that the participating retailer is willing to pay.

20. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the second computer at the retailer location is additionally configured to facilitate the retailer's electronic payment to the rebate processing center for the rebate.

21. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the first computer is additionally configured to transmit the customer information to the third computer at the rebate processing center.

22. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the first computer is configured to encode a customer identification badge with customer information pertaining to a customer who has leased an automobile from the dealer.

23. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein the first computer is configured to encode a customer identification badge with customer information pertaining to a customer who has rented an automobile from the dealer.